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11-14-2008

### Concert: Kulmusik. Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Ithaca College Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Jeffery Meyer

Richard Faria

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ITHACA COLLEGE

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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

KULMUSIK  
CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Hockett Family Recital Hall  
Friday, November 14, 2008  
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

## PROGRAM

Five pieces for orchestra, Op. 16 (1909/25)  
(chamber version)

Arnold Schoenberg  
(1874-1959)

- I. *Vorgefühle* ("Premonitions")
- II. *Vergangenes* ("The Past")
- III. *Farben* ("Color"; also subtitled  
"Summer Morning by a Lake: Chord Colors")
- IV. *Peripetie* ("Turning Point")
- V. *Das obligate Rezitativ* ("The Obligatory Recitative")

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Indigenous Instruments (1989)

Steven Mackey  
(b. 1956)

- I. *swinging, crisp, rhythmic*
- II. *floating, as if improvised*
- III. *mesmerizing, strange, dark, funky*

Richard Faria, conductor

Joy Ride\*\* (2008)

Sally Lamb  
(b. 1966)

## INTERMISSION

Weierstrass\*\* (2008)

Leonid Rezetdinov  
(b. 1961)

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Con Leggerezza Pensosa Omaggio  
a Italo Calvino (1990)

Elliott Carter  
(b. 190

(1923-2006)

- I. *Corrente*
- II. *Calmo, Sustainuto*
- III. *Movimento Preciso E Meccanico*
- IV. *Presto*

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

### **Kulmusik Contemporary Chamber Ensemble**

Sally Lamb\*, artistic director

Jacqueline Christen, flute

Paige Morgan\*, oboe

Richard Faria\*, Adam Butalewicz, clarinet

Tyler Ogilvie, horn

Alicia Aubin, trombone

Susan Waterbury\*, Kate Goldstein, violin

Lauren Buono, viola

Heidi Hoffman\*, Tyler Borden, cello

Nicholas Walker\*, bass

Diane Birr\*, Nathan Gulla, keyboards

Jeffery Meyer\*, Richard Faria\*, conductors

Kulmusik would like to thank Peter Rothbart\* for use of the electronic music studio equipment and for his technical expertise and ongoing support.

\* faculty  
\*\* world premiere

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## Program Notes

Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* were composed from May to August 1909. The earliest performance of any of the music was in a two-piano, eight-hand arrangement (by Anton Webern) of several movements. In September 1912, Henry Wood conducted the first complete performance in England. Equally important was the acceptance of the pieces for publication by the prestigious firm of C. F. Peters. Despite their low fee, Schoenberg used this accomplishment as a bargaining chip with the Viennese publisher Universal. In a letter to Richard Strauss, Schoenberg commented on the unusual nature of the pieces:

Ich verspreche mir allerdings colossal viel davon, insbesondere Klang und Stimmung. Nur um das handelt es sich—absolut nicht symphonisch, direct das Gegenteil davon, keine Architektur, kein Aufbau. Bloss ein bunter, ununterbrochener Wechsel von Farben, Rhythmen und Stimmungen.

I have promised myself colossal results from these pieces, especially in terms of timbres and voicings. These are the only [compositional parameters of these pieces]—absolutely nothing symphonic; just the opposite: no architecture, no constructive premise. Exclusively a colorful, uninterrupted transformation of colors, rhythms, and voicings.

*Five Pieces* was later arranged in 1925 by Schoenberg for chamber ensemble to promote regular performances.

Mark A. Radice\*

*Indigenous Instruments* is vernacular music from a culture that doesn't actually exist. I fantasized about a culture and their uses for music, did thought experiments to invent the kind of instruments they might play and wrote "folk melodies" idiomatic to those instruments. The exercise was silly but did in fact succeed in leading me to sounds and textures that I would never have thought of in my mode as serious concert-music composer.

My starting point was to retune or detune the ensemble; the cello has a radical microtonal scordatura, the violin G string is tuned down an octave and a quarter tone, the flute is pulled out a quarter tone flat, and one note of the piano is prepared. I went to all this trouble, again as in *Micro-Concerto*, to unbutton the sound of the ubiquitous Pierrot ensemble. The inspiration for this came from looking at transcriptions of the mbira (African thumb piano) in an ethnomusicology dissertation. I couldn't really get a sense of what the sound was because these transcriptions seemed so exotic with microtones and odd chord voicings but the look intrigued me and it fascinated me all the more that this indecipherable notation was somebody's vernacular music.

I've had a long fascination with exotic vernacular. I like the sense of a music that seems to obey some natural or, at least, culture-specific laws that are consistent and immutable but completely mysterious to me. Associated with my need to shake up the Pierrot ensemble is a slightly rebellious attitude toward the piano as tyrant of equal temperament. This led me to open the piece with a microtonal string figure which makes the piano, upon its entry, sound like a broken toy; this piece was fun to compose!

In order to compose the cello part, I borrowed a cello and put pieces of scotch tape where the frets "should" be (remember, I'm a guitarist) and learned how to play that pizzicato part in the last movement. Because I was flying by the seat of my pants with the microtones and had no codified or familiar harmonic system at my disposal, I could not think of anything to go with the cello part; none of the "normal" notes sounded good. I played it over and over waiting for inspiration until a UPS truck with its low moan and slow pitch bend pulled into my driveway and I had a Eureka moment. It was the counterpoint between that big brown truck and that dark, funky cello part that led me to tune the G String down an octave.

I realize I'm probably sabotaging my credibility as an artist by revealing so much about the lucky accidents that inform my working method but then again I have always felt an affinity for the tradition of American crack-pot inventor/composers like Cowell and Partch.

*Indigenous Instruments* was commissioned by Chamber Music America for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and was premiered by them in November of 1989.

Steven Mackey

*Joy Ride* for six players (flute, bass clarinet, violin, cello, bass and piano) is intended to be a light-hearted, fun musical excursion that is essentially harmless and happy in nature. The short, rhythmic piece incorporates frequent meter changes with motives, tunes and harmonies that are clearly rooted in tonal and traditional American music. If there is any connection to other connotations of the title (reckless driving in a stolen car, for example), it might be in the way that the tunes are woven into fabrics that are themselves stitched together like a patch-work quilt. The pre-selected materials (and in one case, borrowed material) could be assembled in any number of ways to produce a potentially and equally-pleasing whole.

Sally Lamb

### **Weierstrass**

Seven compact mathematical sets for instrumental nonet, dedicated to Alexander Radvilovich. The conception of Weierstrass has great significance in mathematical analysis. It declares that every limited set of real numbers is compact. The set is called compact when every

infinite sequence of its elements (points) has at least one extreme point that belongs to the same set.

Leonid Rezetdinov

*Con Leggerezza Pensosa* was commissioned by Dr. Raffaele Pozzi, the director of the Istituto di Studi Musicali in Latina, Italy, as an homage to the Italian author, Italo Calvino, to be performed in connection with the institute's first annual awards for the best musicological papers of the year. Italo Calvino, who died after writing but before giving his Norton Lectures at Harvard University, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Lezioni americane), was singled out for this homage because he presents in these lectures a new view of humanism which has become an inspiration for the Istituto di Studi Musicali.

The title was suggested by the remark Calvino makes in his lecture on Lightness: "spero innanzitutto d'aver dimostrato che esiste una leggerezza della pensosità, così come tutti sappiamo che esiste una leggerezza della frivolezza; anzi, la leggerezza pensosa può far apparire la frivolezza come pesante e opaca." (Above all I hope to have shown that there is such a thing as a lightness of thoughtfulness, just as we know there is a lightness of frivolity. In fact, thoughtful lightness can make frivolity seem dull and heavy.)

My short piece for clarinet, violin and cello was written in June 1990.

Elliott Carter

### **Kammerkonzert**

In the Chamber Concerto (1969–70) for flute (piccolo), oboe (oboe d'amore, cor anglais), clarinet, bass clarinet (2d clarinet), horn, tenor trombone, harpsichord (harmonium), piano (celesta) and string quintet, all parts are equally important and equally demanding of the performers. At no time is any single instrument singled out for special treatment (as would occur in a solo concerto), nor is there a group of soli (as would be the case in a concerto grosso).

Concerning the structure of the piece, Ligeti has noted:

There are no tonal centres, nor are there any harmonic combinations or progressions which can be functionally analyzed; on the other hand the twelve notes of the chromatic scale are not treated as notes of equal importance, as in atonal and serial music. There are specific predominant arrangements of intervals, which determine the course of the music and the development of the form. . . . The harmonies do not change suddenly, but merge into one another; one clearly discernable interval combination is gradually blurred, and from this cloudiness it is possible to discern a new interval combination gradually taking shape. (commentary for Decca Record Company, 1976).

Mark A. Radice